

Temple Theatre Marquee



Temple Theater, during.

In 1995, Main Street volunteers decided to restore the theatre's marquee. This took hundreds of volunteer hours. First, a good deal of time was spent removing bird

nests from the exposed areas of the marquee. Then the old paint was removed by sandblasting the metal. Ken Groethe, an electrician from Chippewa Falls and a member of the Chippewa Falls Main Street Program, worked diligently on rewiring the old marquee. As the project was drawing to a close, plans for a grand unveiling began. The "Light Night" dedication was scheduled and volunteers sold and designed ads and posters to promote the event. The project's progress wasn't easy to keep secret. Much of lamping work was done after 11:00 p.m. to enable volunteers to turn on the marquee's lights without ruining the unveiling surprise.

On the day of the unveiling, the marquee was draped in canvas early in the morning, and spotlights were strategically placed on the rooftop across the street from the Temple. The theatre's lobby was cleaned so t-shirts and souvenirs could be sold inside. Music began playing at 7:00 p.m.

Downtown Viroqua was filled with the cheers of more than 500 people as the canvas was slowly lifted, revealing the restored, flashing marquee of the Temple Theatre. The police department rerouted Highway 14 traffic down the side streets due to the crowd. The Common Ground Café and Center Stage, the two businesses located on each side of the theatre, also celebrated the grand openings of their newly-renovated businesses that night.



Temple Theater, after.

The Temple Theatre was once again in the spotlight for Viroqua's Sesqui-centennial Celebration. Volunteers restored 300 seats and painted the lobby, including decorative painting on the pillars. The sound and lighting system were updated and on July 6, 1996, local citizens performed "Pioneers to New Frontiers" on the old stage. The historic Temple Theatre is officially back in use.

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For more information, call the Wisconsin Main Street Program at (608) 266-7531.

